

Anthony \$1 faces a production lull

By Roger Boye

The United States Mint will suspend production of most Susan B. Anthony dollars next year while officials decide how to get the unwanted coins to circulate.

That announcement was made recently by mint director Stella Hackel Sims as she testified before a congressional subcommittee.

Since early 1979, the government has produced more than 800 million Anthony dollars, but more than half of them are in storage because people won't use the coins in daily business transactions. The dollar is the same color as, and only slightly larger than, a quarter.

Some Treasury Department executives would like to change the metal composition of the Anthony dollar to give it a yellow or brass color. Still others want to revamp the design on the "tails side," replacing the motif of an eagle landing on the moon with a large number "1" to signify "one dollar."

Congress would have to approve any change in the coin's color or design, and hearings would not be held until next spring, according to a report in the hobby newspaper Coin World. Both talked-about changes would make the coin easier to recognize.

Under current plans, about six million 1981-dated Anthony dollars will be produced for inclusion in next year's proof and uncirculated coin sets sold by the mint, but none will be made for

general circulation.

- What may be the first coin produced in the 13 Colonies — a silver "New England sixpence" — sold for \$75,000 last month in the third auction sale of the astounding Garrett collection.

The first two Garrett auctions in November, 1979, and last March set price records for hundreds of rare coins. The third sale in New York was no exception, as winning bids on about 500 coins totaled more than \$4 million.

Bidding on the rare New England sixpence — minted in 1652 in Boston — started at \$3,000 and advanced quickly. It is one of only six known to exist today.

Colonial lawmakers ordered the coins produced so settlers would not have to trade shells and furs as money. Scholars believe the silver used in the shillings (named after an English coin) came from the West Indies, possibly from pirates who attacked and pilfered Spanish ships.

Other winning Garrett bids included \$130,000 for a 1795 \$10 gold piece and \$95,000 for a "continental dollar" of 1776.

T. Harrison Garrett, a Baltimore millionaire and railroad executive, assembled most of the collection in the 1800s, and his sons later added several pieces. In recent years the collection has been owned by Johns Hopkins University.

The fourth and last auction of the "coin sale of the century" will be held next March in Los Angeles.

- Surging inflation worldwide has forced many European governments to consider abolishing small-denomination coins that have become nearly worthless.

The British half-penny, West German pfennig, and Italian five lire could all be axed by 1985, if not sooner, experts believe.